

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-04 FRB-01

INR-05 NSAE-00 RSC-01 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 SP-02

CIEP-01 LAB-01 SIL-01 OMB-01 AGR-05 SWF-01 PA-01

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2007

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: EGEN, PN

SUBJ: CITRICOS DE CHIRIQUI (CDC) CLOSURE

REF: PANAMA 5891

1. FOLLOWING IS PRESENT STATUS OF PLANS BY SUBJECT COMPANY TO TERMINATE OPERATIONS AT ITS CITRUS GROVES AND JUICE CONCENTRATE PLANT AT CHIRIQUI, AS DESCRIBED RECENTLY TO EMBOFF BY BERT REISS, A CDC SPOKESMAN.

2. GOP REPRESENTATIVES MET WITH CDC EMPLOYEES ON OCTOBER 30 TO INFORM THEM THAT GOP HAS SIGNED A DECREE AUTHORIZING CDC TO PROCEED WITH TERMINAL PAYMENTS DUE TO THEM UNDER THE LABOR CODE. THEY INDICATED GOP'S INTENTION TO PURCHASE CDC'S OPERATIONS AND TO RE-ESTABLISH THEM UNDER A COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENT WITH WORKERS, SIMILAR TO ONE WITH SUGAR CANE WORKERS, UNDER THE COOPERATIVE SCHEME, EACH FAMILY WOULD BE ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITY FOR COLLECTION OF FRUIT ON 10 ACRES FOR DELIVERY TO THE PLANT. SIXTY WORKERS HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO A WESTERN PANAMA SUGAR PLANTATION WHERE SUCH A HARVESTING PLAN IS IN OPERATION SO THEY COULD OBTAIN A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF IT. THE GOP HAS APPOINTED PEREZ HERRERA AS GENERAL MANAGER OF THE COOPERATIVE

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ENTERPRISE.

3. DETAILS OF THE GOP PURCHASE HAVE YET TO BE WORKED OUT.
UNTIL THE PURCHASE IS CONSUMMATED, THE PLANT WOULD REMAIN IDLE,
BUT A CARETAKER STAFF WILL MAINTAIN FACILITIES AND THE CITRUS
GROVES.

4. REISS REPORTED GOP HAS BEEN "VERY DECENT" IN ITS TREATMENT
OF CDC AND HE ANTICIPATED NO MAJOR PROBLEMS. HE PROMISED TO
KEEP EMBASSY CURRENTLY INFORMED OF FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS.
JORDEN

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